

NCAR



Information Release

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For Immediate Release

MacQueen Named Head of High Altitude Observatory

Boulder, Colorado---The University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) has appointed Robert M. MacQueen director of the High Altitude Observatory (HAO) here. Formerly head of the Coronal Physics Section, Dr. MacQueen replaces Gordon A. Newkirk, Jr., who returns to full-time scientific work at HAO after 11 years as director.

HAO is a component of the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), which is sponsored by the National Science Foundation and operated by UCAR.

After receiving a B.S. in physics at Southwestern at Memphis and a Ph.D. in atmospheric sciences at Johns Hopkins University, MacQueen joined HAO in 1968. Shortly afterward, he became principal investigator for the white-light coronagraph operated by HAO aboard the manned Skylab satellite during 1973-1974. He also was responsible for analyzing coronal photographs made during the Apollo 15, 16, and 17 lunar landing missions.

Currently, he is the principal investigator for HAO's coronagraph/polarimeter to be launched this fall aboard the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Solar Maximum Mission spacecraft. He also is principal investigator for a solar observing package being designed by HAO, Stanford University, the Naval Research Laboratory, and American Science and Engineering Corporation to be launched with NASA's Solar Polar Mission in 1983. And in a joint project with the Harvard/Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, he is one of the principal investigators for a series of solar observing rocket flights.

MacQueen is the author of more than 40 professional papers and has received the NCAR Technology Advancement Award and the NASA Medal for Exceptional Scientific Achievement.

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Among his scientific achievements are:

- Confirmation of a 40-year-old theory on the existence of thermal emissions from coronal dust particles.
- Measurements of the far-infrared brightness of the solar disc that ended a controversy over the boundary conditions of the chromosphere.
- Demonstration, along with other scientists, show that the corona is more dynamic than expected, that coronal transients occur more frequently, and that transients have a greater effect than expected on coronal evolution.

MacQueen is a member of the American Association of Physics Teachers, the American Geophysical Union, the Optical Society of America, the American Astronomical Society (chairman, Solar Physics Division, 1976-1978), and the International Astronomical Union. He has served on the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), Committee on Space Astronomy and Astrophysics, the NASA Spacelab Facility Definition Team, and the NAS Committee on Space Physics.

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